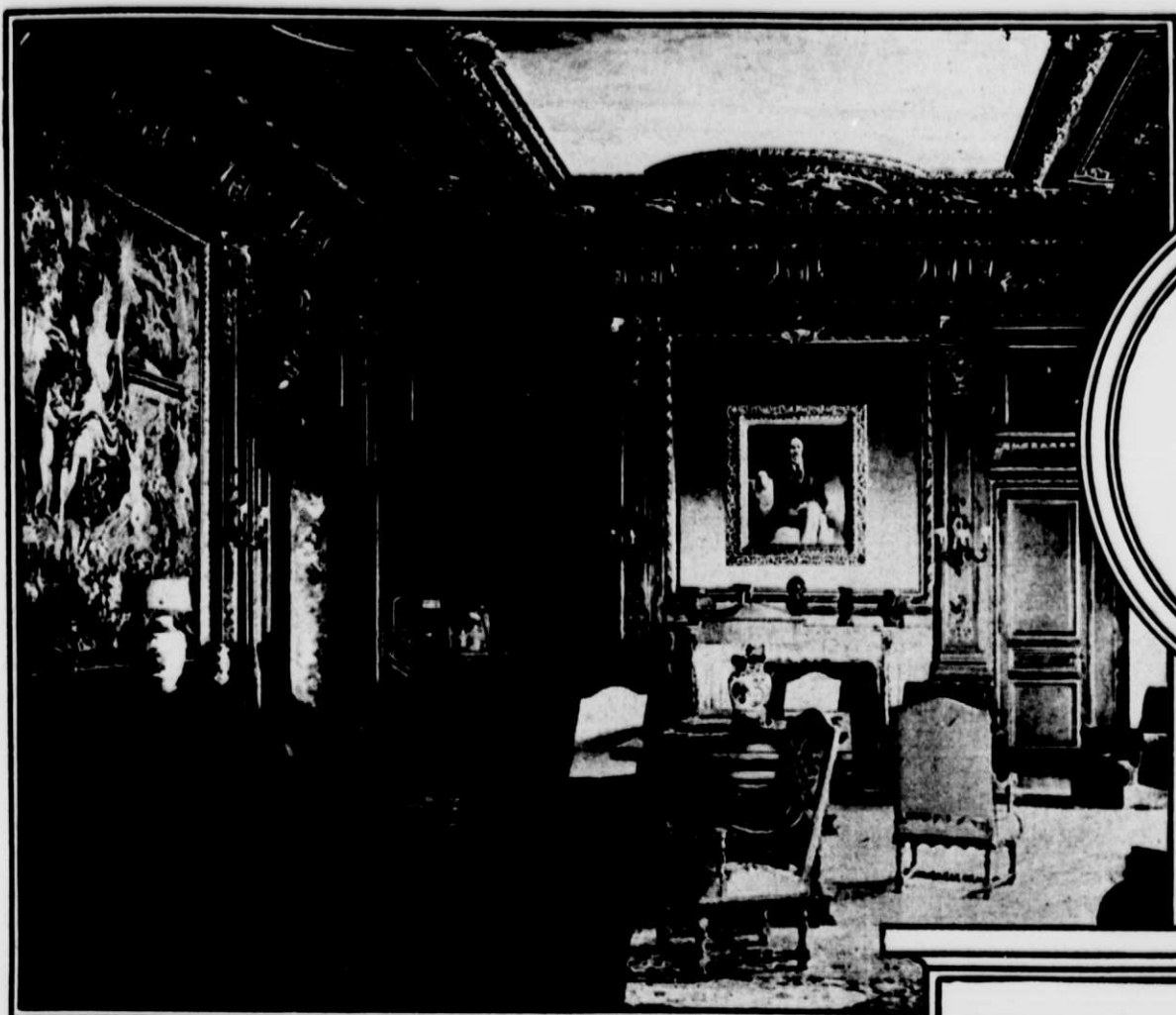


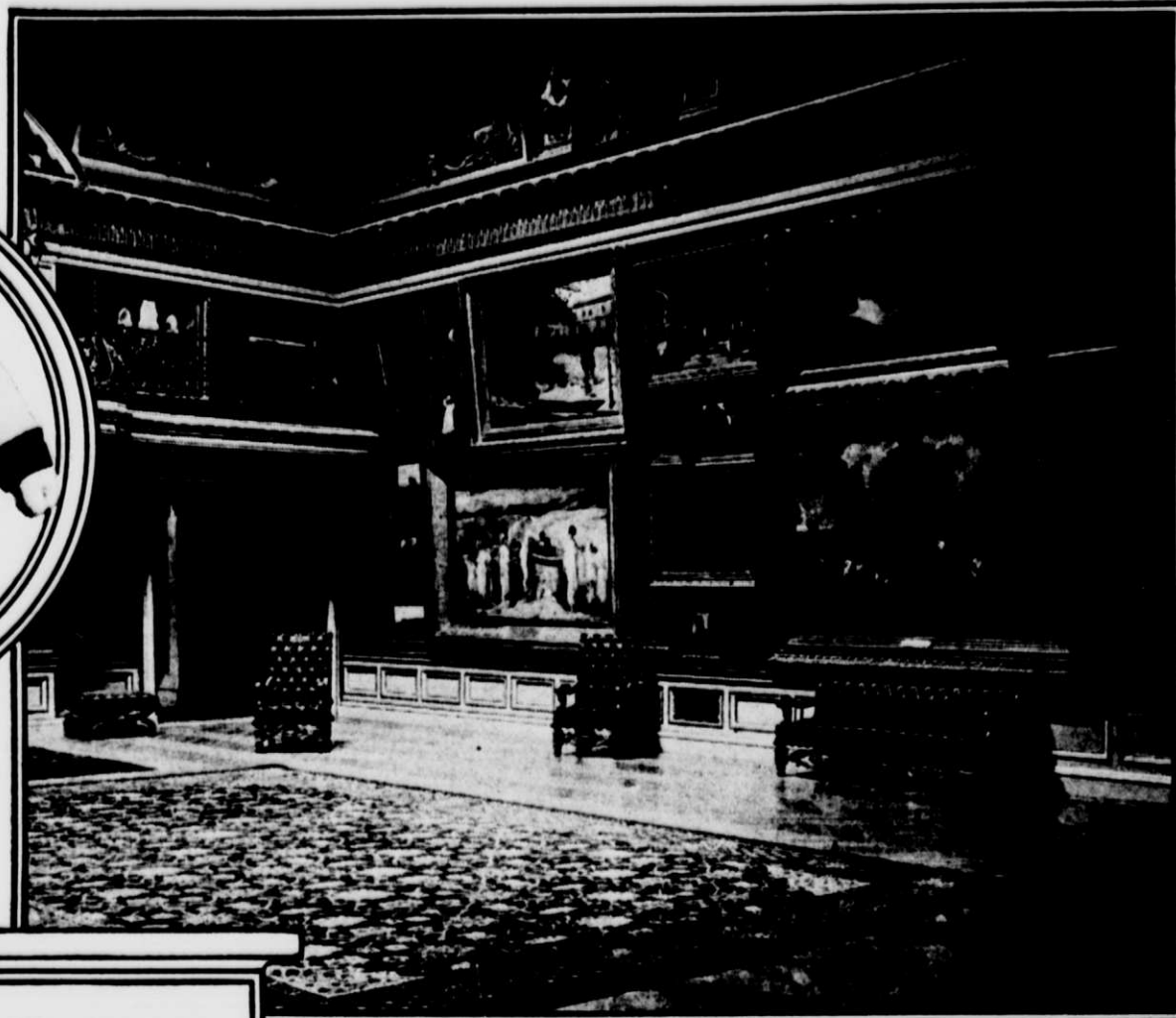
THE ASTOR RESIDENCE AS REMODELLED



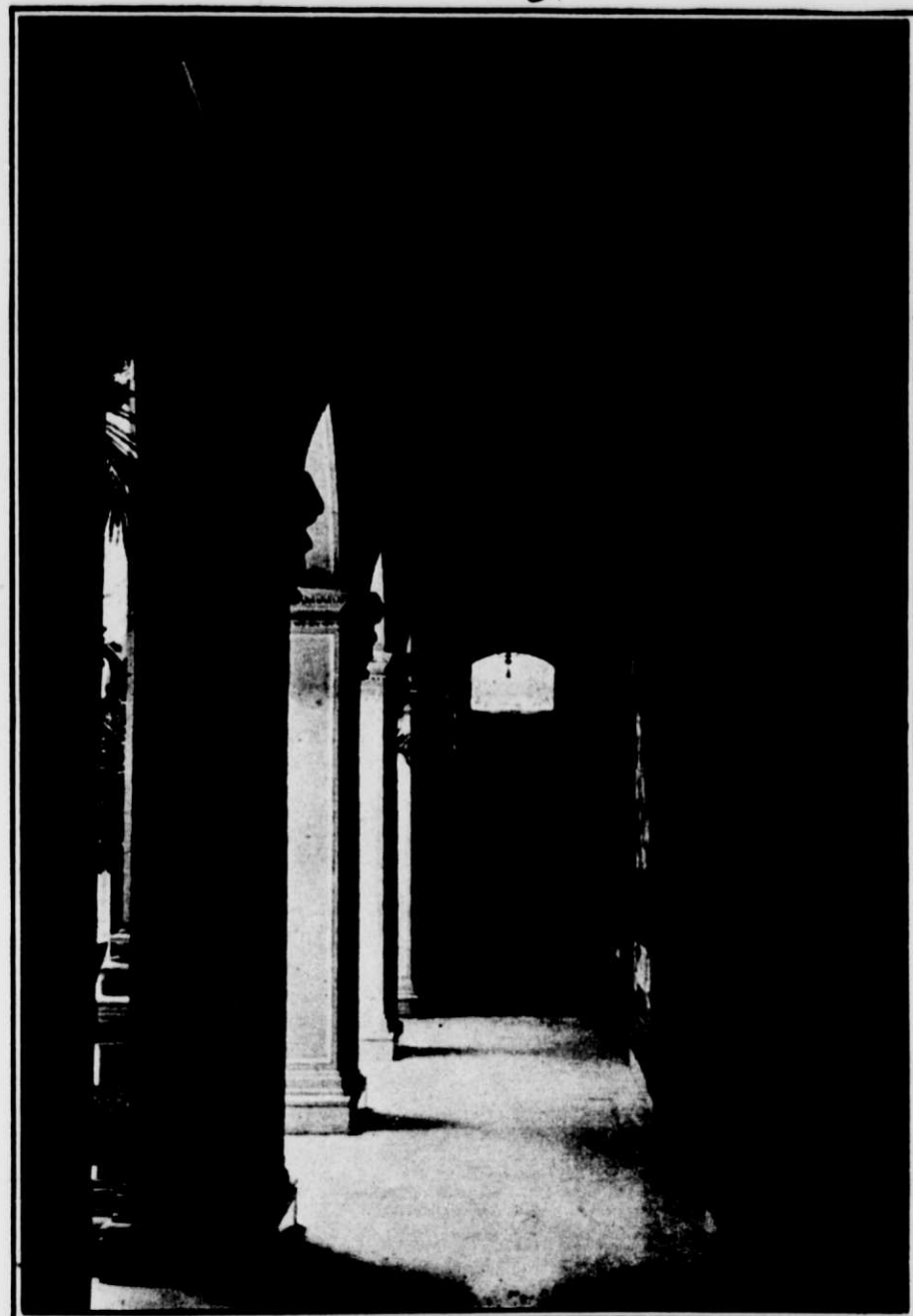
The Library



John Jacob Astor



The Ball Room with Picture Gallery



The Stairway from Main Hall

PROBABLY no home on fashionable Fifth avenue carries with it a wider interest than does that of the late John Jacob Astor, for this graystone mansion has the distinction of combining two houses long first in social prestige. It was several years ago that Mr. Astor conceived the idea of transforming into one his mother's and his own town houses, and the present magnificent structure is the result.

Mr. Astor may have been influenced by sentiment as well as by a desire to make the Astor home one of the most complete in New York and one that will stand as a monument to the name in carrying out this project.

Although these walls have long figured in the social history of New York, for the past three years there has been no entertaining, as its present chatelaine, Mrs. John Jacob Astor, has been in mourning. For the first time since she has been its occupant she opened its portals to guests this winter. While these entertainments were chiefly for charities in which Mrs. Astor is interested and did not reflect the old time gaiety, they were forerunners in a revival of its social life. However, aside from its social history, the architectural importance of the house makes it an object of interest, even to the sightseer who rides in the "rubberneck" wagon or atop a Fifth avenue bus.

The entrance to this great house is most impressive and imposing with its enormous double iron gates leading into the big hall connecting the two structures and standing directly in the centre of the house. In its centre a beautiful white marble fountain plays, while the corridor on three sides is formed by large marble columns, connecting the arches. On the fourth side is a wonderfully carved oak screen separating the entrance from the great hall.

Both the screen and the fountain are modern in design and are the original conception of the architect. Mural paintings enhance the beauty of the panels between the columns and from the arches are suspended wrought iron lamps displaying clusters of lights. The austere aspect is somewhat softened by the incidental furnishings of old oak and walnut chairs and sofas with Flemish tapestries and a scattering of Persian rugs.

A pleasing note is added by the presence of bay trees and palms set in Ming jars and placed before the columns. On either side of the hall at the front are reception rooms, uniform in size and so small they hardly seem a part of these vast surroundings. Their furnishings reflect the Louis XV. period and are superb in their richness and simplicity. The cold gray tones, which predominate, are delightfully warmed by frequent touches of ashes of roses.

In the north room the gray carpet in the centre is covered with a Persian rug, showing much of this color, as also do the mural tapestries. The old French furniture is upholstered with brocades in soft toned greens and grays.

At the rear of the hall is the ball-room, with its picture gallery, perhaps the most famous in New York on account of the annual ball which it

was the custom of Mrs. Astor to give for many years. Here the ceiling is in gilt and glass and the walls are clothed in red damask, although this large collection of paintings made by Mrs. Astor and her son occupy a great part of the mural space.

A minstrel gallery of black and gold ironwork overlooks one end of the room, while at the reverse side one is attracted to a painting of an unknown lady inset in the marble chimney piece. At these annual balls Mrs. Astor invited persons of all ages and for years an invitation to one of these dances was sought after eagerly by those who aspired to social distinction.

Leading from the north reception room is the morning room, which as the houses stood originally was the drawing room of Mrs. Astor. Here the walls are exquisitely paneled in cream, with paintings and gilt effects in carving. This panel effect is broken by large mirrors set in the walls with consoles below them. The doors opening into the dining room are also mirrored. The furniture in this room is rare and beautiful, being covered with Beauvais tapestry said to be the most valuable in this country.

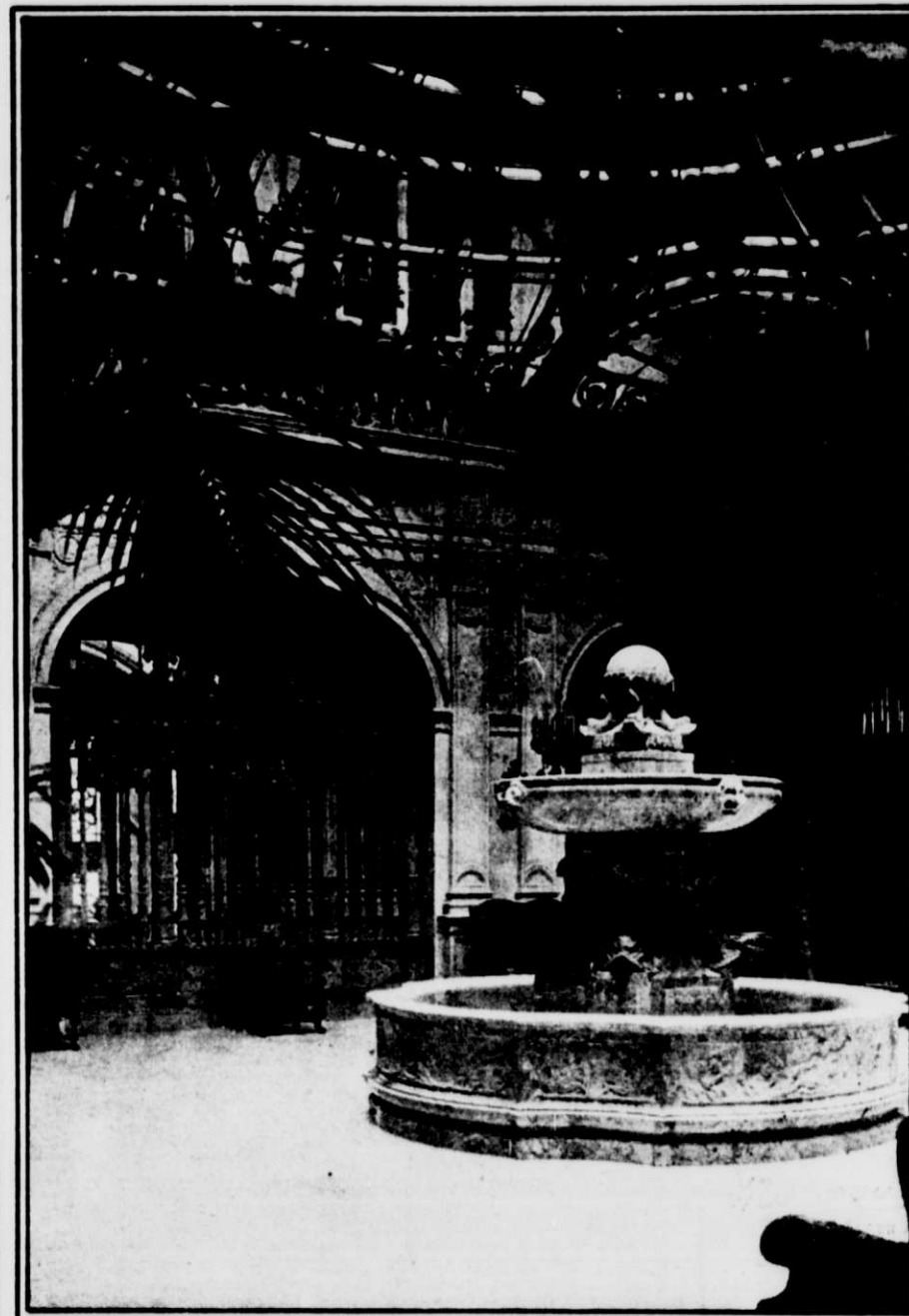
Distinct and striking are the decorations of the big dining room. The checked board floor of marble in black and white is a dominating note that attracts at once and gives the room an atmosphere of individuality. The walls are paneled with marble, with three large Gobelin tapestries interposing. The group of windows have fluted lace hangings. A ceiling in gold relief shows much blue and red in the medallions.

English oak is chosen for the dining room set. The chairs are upholstered in gold and green brocade. It is interesting to note a portrait of the original John Jacob Astor over the mantel.

No less attractive is the library, which was originally Col. Astor's dining room. The walls are paneled in brown oak with a carving touched in gilt. In the centre is a massive table of carved walnut exquisitely executed.

On the table is a rare piece of Louis XV. embroidery in gold on rose velvet. It is said to have been one of the last articles bought by Col. Astor. When he discovered the piece it was worn with age, but he had it mended and its beauty restored. All through the house a fondness has been shown for Chinese articles, and in this room there is a Chinese painted leather screen. Bonnat's life sized portrait of Col. Astor hangs over the gray stone mantel. Two davenport and large comfortable chairs lend an inviting atmosphere.

An interesting figure in this household is John Jacob Astor V., the youngest of his line, who lives a life simpler than some children in moderate circumstances, despite the fact his three millions are growing far more rapidly than he is. His young mother, who is a splendid athlete and devoted to outdoor sports, is a believer in the fresh air treatment, and her constant thought of his health has made him a sturdy youngster. From a rather delicate baby he has developed perfectly and is larger than the average child his own age.

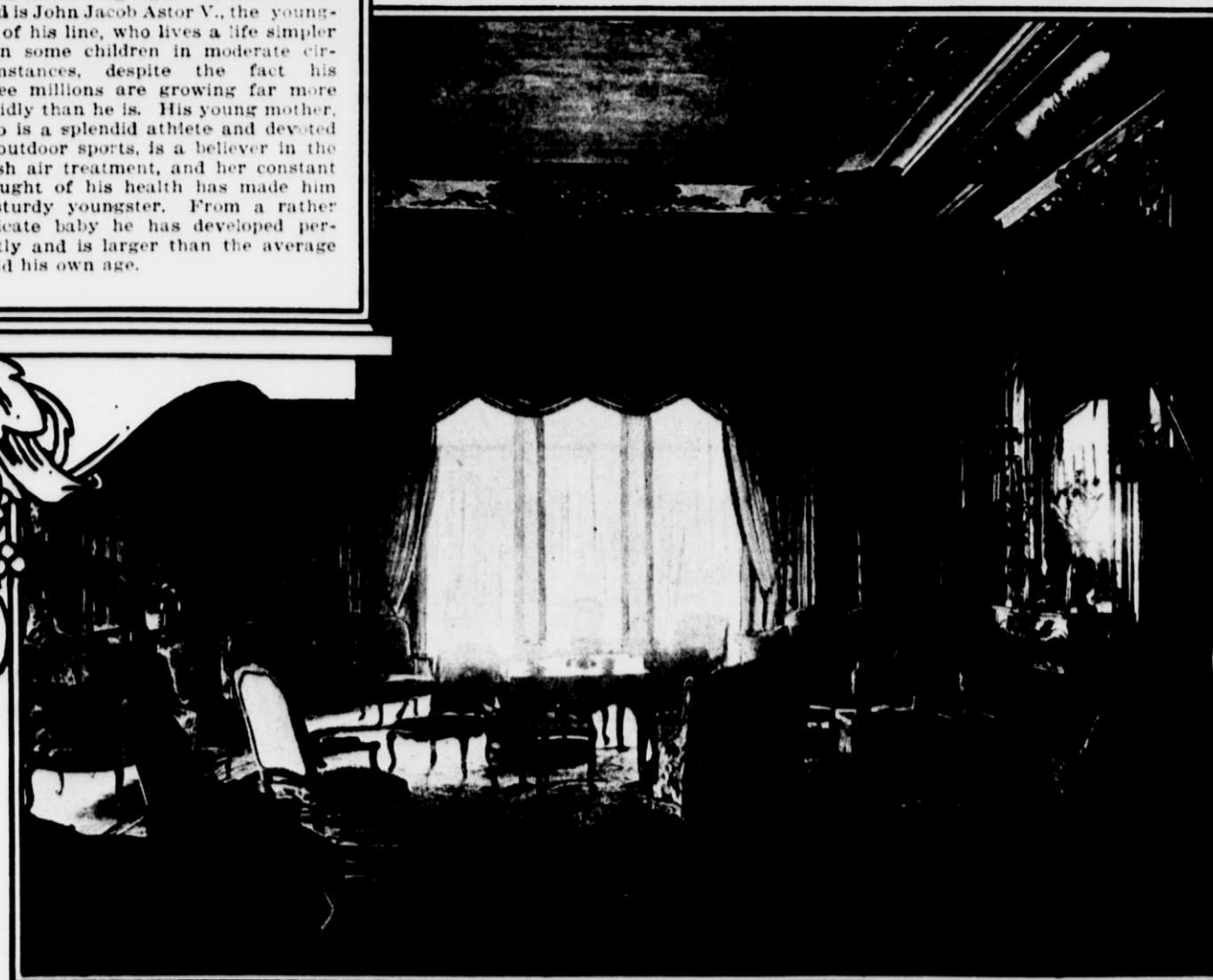


The Great Hall



The Dining Room

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The Drawing Room